

ABOUT US

In the late 1800s to the mid 1960s, faced with repeated floods, flood management agencies (reclamation districts, levee maintenance districts, drainage districts, flood control districts, the state and the Corps of Engineers) built a network of levees to direct water away from people and property. Since 1911, these federal levees have been regulated by the Reclamation Board.

The Reclamation Board works in cooperation with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and local maintaining agencies to reduce risk of flooding along the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and their tributaries.

Prepared by:  
The Reclamation Board  
in partnership with  
Department of Water Resources  
*Division of Flood Management*



Phone: (916) 574-0651  
Fax: (916) 574-0681  
recboardquestions@water.ca.gov  
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 1L40  
Sacramento, California 95821  
<http://www.recbd.ca.gov>  
For emergencies call (916) 574-2619

THE RECLAMATION BOARD  
NEED FOR A  
PERMIT

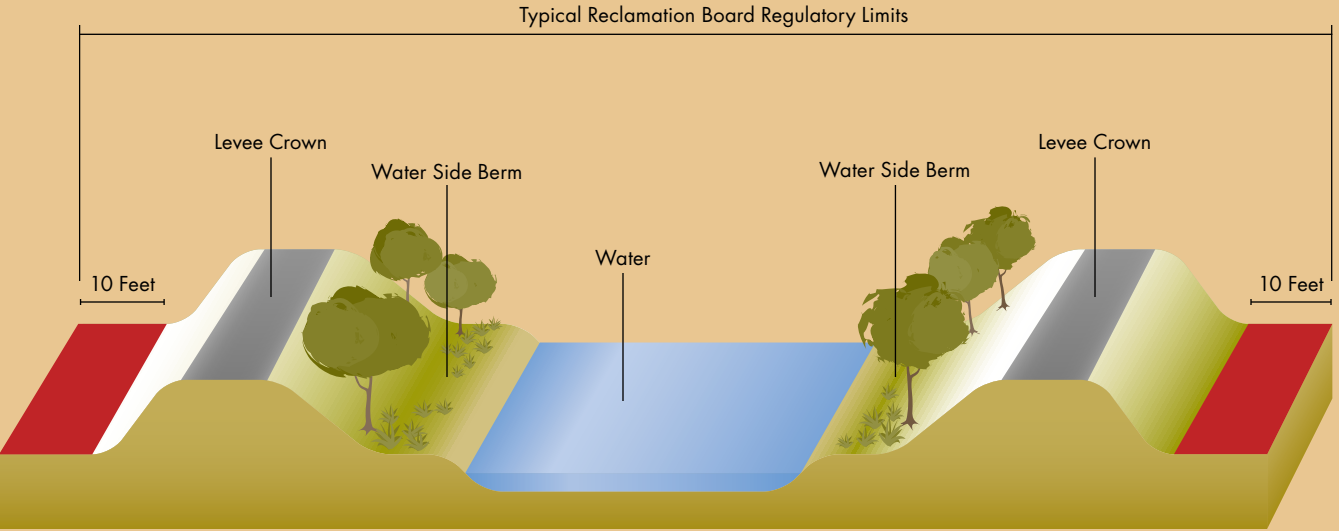


OVERVIEW

As a landowner living near a regulated federal flood control levee in the Sacramento or San Joaquin Central Valley or Delta, you probably have questions about the restrictions the levee places on your property and what kinds of projects are allowable by law. In this pamphlet you'll find the answers to many of your questions, along with some information on how to keep your property from flooding.

You are required to apply for a Reclamation Board encroachment permit if your project or work plan:

- Is on a federal flood control levee or within the surrounding 10-foot Reclamation Board easement (see illustration);
- May impact the flood control functioning of levees;
- Is within the floodway of regulated Central Valley streams listed in Table 8.1 in Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations (Title 23 can be viewed on-line at <http://www.recbd.ca.gov>).



Typical levee cross-section showing the 10-foot Reclamation Board regulatory easement.

PERMIT PROCESS

The protection offered by flood control systems should never be compromised. To ensure this, the Board requires permits for any actions that may affect the system (more than 17,000 have been issued).

How do I obtain an encroachment permit application?

An electronic copy of the permit application (along with required DWR Forms 3615 and 3615a) can be downloaded from the Board’s Web site at <http://www.recbd.ca.gov/forms.cfm>. To request a hard copy of a permit application contact the Reclamation Board at (916) 574-0651.

How do I get my application approved?

An application must meet Standards of Title 23, California Environmental Quality Act, and be endorsed by the responsible local agency. If you need assistance to identify your local maintaining agency please contact the Reclamation Board. If your application is incomplete in anyway, processing will be delayed. The Board will acknowledge receipt of your application in writing within 10 days of receipt and will notify you within 30 days whether the application is complete or requires additional data.

What if my project doesn’t meet the Reclamation Board Standards?

If your project does not meet the Board’s standards and regulations, a Board hearing may be requested to consider approval of a variance.

Always obtain a Reclamation Board encroachment permit prior to commencing any project on or near a federal levee or within the Board’s easement.

FLOOD FACTS

- The Federal flood control system consists of nearly 1600 miles of levees that protect the Central Valley from devastating floods. These levees have been “authorized” by the state and federal governments and are known as “federal levees”.
- The Reclamation Board has the responsibility of regulating encroachments that may affect the federal flood control system, which was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is maintained by local maintaining agencies.
- The Reclamation Board has adopted about 1300 miles of floodways to protect the public from flooding.
- During the 1997 floods, the federal flood control system prevented billions of dollars in damages to the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. However, there were several levee failures emphasizing the need to protect the levee system.
- A 100-year flood has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. There is a about 26% chance that a 100-year flood will occur during a typical homeowner’s 30-year mortgage. The chance of house fire during the same 30 years is about 1%.

MAINTENANCE

Why are levees so important?

- Levees provide flood protection for the Central Valley, one of the largest and highest valued areas within California.
- Major cities and many smaller towns in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, and the Delta are protected by flood control projects.
- Proper maintenance of flood control levees is crucial to help preserve their structural integrity.
- Proper maintenance of levees allows local maintaining agencies to visually inspect the slopes, which is critical during high water events.
- Keeping a well maintained levee reduces the risk of failure and protects the public and the State’s resources and economy.

Who maintains these levees?

The Federal flood control project levees were built by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of California has accepted the operations and maintenance responsibility. State then transfers essentially all of

this operations and maintenance responsibility to local maintaining agencies. Thus, the daily levee operations and maintenance responsibility lies with the local maintaining agencies.

How you can help protect these flood control levees:

- Keep levee slopes clear of obstructions, including vegetation and structures for proper inspection.
- Do not plant any fruit or nut trees on or near levees, which attracts burrowing rodents to the levees.
- Comply with the Reclamation Board Title 23 Regulations.
- Report suspected levee problems (i.e. sloughs, boils, etc.) to DWR or the Reclamation Board.



Typical permissive revetment on the waterside of the levee.



Typical steps constructed to the standards of the Reclamation Board.



Boat docks can be allowed if they meet the standards of Title 23.